

In the rural and silent part of town, a penthouse stood shrouded in darkness. The night was still, save for the murmurs coming from within. Inside, in a dimly lit room, an obese, bald man in his fifties, dressed in a black shirt with suspenders, conversed with two men in grey suits. The air was thick with tension, and the shadows seemed to whisper secrets of their own.



The figure lights up his Cigar and looks at the men while sitting on an armchair "How are our little investments. How many coughed up?"

One of the men spoke up "The Santosas have repaid all the money they've owed with interest and the Brown family have paid more than half of what they owed and will be paying the rest next week"

The figure takes a drag of his cigar and puffed out a cloud of white smoke "Hmm! What else?"

Another spoke up "Based on what we can see here almost all our investments are on their way to finish what they owed aside from....."

The figure placed the cigar down and clasped both his hands under his chin looking at the man intensely "Aside from what exactly!?"

The man in grey suit answers in a scared tone "Umm, sir u see the Sohail family has started to become a problem"

The figure looks at the man intensely "Zain's Family? What kind of problem?"

The man replied "You see, they are refusing to pay us time and time again, stating that they have no money to spare, but you don't have to worry sir. I shot her son I am a sure now they a-"

A revolver goes off with a *Boom*, the figure could be seen holding the revolver as a trail of smoke soon follows from the tip of the barrel. The shot was made right beside the grey suited man towards the door. The men stood there frozen.

The figure stood up and started wearing his jacket and stated in an assertive tone "Do you know how much I spent on each of these investments? What good are these to me dead!!!???? If that Zain's harlot, Ruvana, refused to pay, then we could have easily used her son as leverage but no, you thick skulled pieces of sh-"

"The son is alive." A person wearing a white coat enters the room.

"Ah!" The obese figure's eyes brightened. "I didn't realize you were arriving, boss. To what do I owe this visit?"

The man, in an authoritative tone, responded, "You lot, go back to your work. And you," he pointed to the obese figure, "and you two," he pointed to the two who shot Ruvana's son.

"Yes, sir?" the obese figure replied.

"You three are coming with me; we have a lot to discuss," the man said firmly.



They both stepped outside the penthouse and into the black car waiting in the shadows. The area around the penthouse was enveloped by a sea of lush green trees, their leaves whispering secrets in the night breeze. The car's engine purred to life with a low, ominous whir, and they left the penthouse behind, disappearing into the darkness.

In the distance, among the tall trees, a shadowy figure watched their departure with piercing eyes. The figure's gaze then shifted towards the penthouse, a sense of purpose emanating from its stance. Silently, the figure drew a nightstick from its coat, the

moonlight glinting off its surface. With deliberate steps, the figure began to move towards the penthouse, the night air thick with an unsettling anticipation.



Ahnaf woke up to the sound of his alarm clock beeping. As he slammed his hand down to silence it, the clock shattered under his touch. He quickly stood up, staring at the crushed clock in disbelief.

"What the hell?!" he muttered, scratching his head in confusion.

"When did this become so delicate?"

He decided to check his computer for any messages. As he clicked the mouse, it crumbled in his hand, the buttons falling apart like brittle candy.

"Seriously? Even the mouse?" Ahnaf muttered, shaking his head in disbelief.

He reached for his game controller, hoping to distract himself with a quick game. But as soon as he pressed a button, the controller cracked and split in two.

"Great, now I can't even play games," he sighed, tossing the broken pieces aside.

Heading to the bathroom, he grabbed his toothbrush. The moment he applied a bit of pressure, the toothbrush snapped in half, sending bristles flying.

"Come on! Even my toothbrush?" Ahnaf groaned, staring at the broken handle.

He turned on the sink to wash his face, but as he twisted the faucet, it came off in his hand, water spraying everywhere.

"Mom's not going to be happy about that," he sighed, trying to stop the water flow.

Finally, he decided to get dressed. As he opened his wardrobe, the door came off its hinges, nearly falling on him.

"Okay, this is getting ridiculous," Ahnaf said, half-laughing, half-exasperated.

He carefully picked out a shirt and put it on, making sure not to tear it apart. "I think I need to be extra careful today," he muttered to himself, still bewildered.

He put on his jacket and headed downstairs. The smell of fried eggs filled the air, and he could hear his mom humming as she made breakfast. The TV was on, broadcasting news about a burglary in an old penthouse outside of town. Six people had been found beaten to death with a blunt object. The police mentioned similar incidents over the past five years, particularly in the shadier parts of town, and speculated about a vigilante.

Ahnaf moved forward and hugged his mother from behind, seeking comfort in the familiar warmth of her presence.



"I am so sorry, Ma! I didn't mean to—" Ahnaf stated in an apologetic tone.

Ruvana stopped him with a smile and held his hand. "It's okay! You don't have to apologize; you are a young man after all, and I knew that I had to tell you about it someday." She then took a plate and placed the eggs and two slices of bread on it. "Go and sit on the couch now, since you broke the table," she giggled.

Ahnaf, looking down, said, "Well, I broke the alarm clock too..."

Ruvana was startled. "What!?"

Ahnaaf finished his breakfast and left for school. As he neared the bus stand, he saw the school bus leaving. He was late today. He started to run quickly, trying to catch up. As he closed the gap, he hit the side of the bus with his fist, and surprisingly, a small dent appeared with every hit he made. Ahnaaf noticed this and stopped in his tracks. He looked at his hand and wondered,

"First it was the table, then the alarm clock... Now this. What is going on with me?"

The bus then stopped, and the door opened. A voice screamed, "Hey kid! If you wanna get the bus that bad, then how about showing up sooner next time, huh?" It was the bus driver.

Ahnaaf got on the bus, and as usual, he saw Kelly pointing to the seat next to her. He sat next to her and, for a short period of time, forgot all his problems as the bus rode off.



It was 2pm, and during lunch break, Ahnaf was at his locker in the hallway, organizing his books. Suddenly, Fred came running towards him and deliberately crashed into him. They both fell to the ground.

Fred yelled, "Hey, small fry! The hallway isn't your runaway father's property, so stop hogging all the space when you check your locker!"



Ahnaf stood up furiously. "Fred! Watch your language, you're out of line!"

Fred slammed Ahnaf's locker shut and loomed over him. "That's the thing, little guy," he sneered, grabbing Ahnaf's cheek. "I set the rules, and you follow them."

Ahnaf swatted Fred's hand away. "Don't touch me!"

Fred laughed mockingly. "Or what? Are you gonna run back to your mommy? Maybe that's why your father left, haha!"

Ahnaf clenched his fist in anger and punched Fred hard in the chest. To his surprise, Fred flew across the hallway and crashed into the lockers on the opposite side. The hallway fell silent as everyone stared in shock at what had just happened.

A crowd began to gather, circling around Ahnaf. It finally caught my attention as I was heading to the cafeteria with Kelly. The commotion around Ahnaf's locker drew us in. We ran towards it and saw Ahnaf standing in front, with Fred on the opposite side, menacingly glaring at him.

Fred charged towards Ahnaf, and I tried to push through the crowd to reach him, but one of Fred's lackeys stopped us. We could do nothing but watch. Fred punched Ahnaf in the face, and though he stumbled, he didn't fall. Fred followed up with another punch to his gut, pushing Ahnaf back a little.

I saw Kelly tear up and start screaming, "Please leave Ahnaf alone! Please, guys, this isn't fair!" But her voice was drowned out by the crowd chanting, "FIGHT! FIGHT! FIGHT!"

Fred, fueled by the crowd's cheers, threw another punch at Ahnaf's face. Ahnaf's head snapped to the side, but he remained standing. Fred's frustration grew, and he unleashed a flurry of punches, each one landing with a sickening thud. Ahnaf staggered but didn't go down.

"Why won't you just fall?!" Fred shouted, his voice filled with rage.

Ahnaf, despite the pain, managed to stay on his feet. He could feel the strength surging through him, the same strength that had crushed his alarm clock and dented the bus. With each punch, he felt more determined to stand his ground.



Then, just as Fred was about to throw another blow at Ahnaf's face, something amazing happened. Ahnaf blocked it with his palm, holding Fred's clenched fist with the palm of his left hand. Ahnaf then folded his palm over Fred's fist, and a cracking sound could be heard. Fred screamed in pain. Never in my wildest dreams had I

ever thought of seeing Fred scream like that, given how strong he was.

"AAAAHHHHH!! MY FINGERS!!! DAMN YOU!!!" Fred's eyes turned red, and tears started to fall.

Ahnaf's eyes narrowed with determination. He delivered a crushing hook to Fred's face, sending him slamming into the lockers on the side. The impact was so powerful that the lockers dented deeply. Fred tried to regain his footing, but Ahnaf was relentless. He followed up with a powerful side kick to Fred's gut, denting the lockers even more and pushing Fred deeper into the metal.

Fred, now desperate and in pain, swung wildly at Ahnaf, but Ahnaf easily dodged the punches. With each missed swing, Fred's frustration grew. Ahnaf grabbed Fred by the collar and lifted him off the ground, slamming him into the lockers again. The metal groaned under the force, bending and warping around Fred's body.

With a final, powerful punch, Ahnaf sent Fred crashing through the lockers, leaving a gaping hole in the metal. Fred lay on the ground, unconscious and defeated. The hallway fell silent as everyone stared in shock at what had just happened.



Just then, the prefects arrived with the teachers, and the crowd quickly dissipated. I stood there with Kelly, both of us in disbelief at the scene before us. Ahnaf stood at the center, his chest heaving with adrenaline, his eyes still burning with fury.

An hour later, down at the principal's office...

"This is unacceptable behavior!" the principal screamed, glaring at us.

"Oh, yes? Is it? Then children getting bullied at your school for years now was merit-worthy?" Ruvana clapped her hands slowly, mocking the principal. "Wow, Miss Brown, gotta say! Your school is no less than slums in that case!"

The principal, in an annoyed tone, retorted, "Watch your language, Mrs. Sohail!"

Ruvana shot back, "Had you watched your school properly, then we wouldn't be having this conversation right now!"

The principal's face turned red with frustration. "We have a zero-tolerance policy for violence, Mrs. Sohail. Your son's actions were completely out of line!"

Ruvana crossed her arms, her eyes blazing. "And what about the zero-tolerance policy for bullying? Fred has been tormenting Ahnaf for years, and you did nothing! My son was defending himself."

The principal stammered, "We... we handle bullying cases as they come up. But this level of violence—"

Ruvana interrupted, "Handle? You call ignoring the problem handling it? My son was pushed to his limit because you failed to protect him. If you had done your job, none of this would have happened."

The principal tried to regain control of the conversation. "Mrs. Sohail, we can't condone such behavior. Ahnaf's actions were extreme."

Ruvana leaned forward, her voice cold and steady. "Extreme? What's extreme is allowing a bully to run rampant in your school. What's extreme is turning a blind eye to the suffering of your students. Ahnaf did what he had to do to survive in an environment you failed to control."

The principal's eyes narrowed. "We will have to take disciplinary action against Ahnaf."

We are at the School Principal's Office. Ahnaf's mom and the principal have been at it for 30 minutes now, and there's no sign of stopping. Well, at least now I know where Ahnaf gets his anger from. After an hour-long session of both parties screaming at each other, it all comes down to Ahnaf getting suspended from school for a week. It could have been worse, as Fred is currently in the hospital with broken ribs and a broken jaw. The Santos family has already started pressing charges. All this for someone as bad as Fred Santos? Before Fred was taken to the hospital, I saw his elder brother Paul giving me a glaring look. Well, it's going to be a long week.

Ruvana stood up, her presence commanding. "And I will take legal action against this school for negligence. Let's see how well your zero-tolerance policy holds up in court."

The principal's mouth opened and closed, but no words came out. Ruvana turned to Ahnaf, placing a reassuring hand on his shoulder. "Come on, Ahnaf. We're done here."

It was 4pm, and we were outside of school. Because of the incident, school ended early. Ruvana left us as she had some work to do. The three of us decided to go to the nearby central park.

Ahnaf, now holding Kelly's hand, said, "I don't know what happened. I didn't mean to—"

I interrupted him abruptly, "Dude, it's not about whether you meant to or not. But how could you do that? Have you been going to the gym lately or drinking some kind of protein shake?"

Kelly added, "Yes, Ahnaf, I... I've never seen you like that. The way you roughed up a guy like Fred. I don't know if that's normal or not."

Ahnaf held her hand tightly as we neared the pond. "I don't know. Nothing normal has been happening to me lately."

I asked, "How?"

"Well, first it was the bullet wound," Ahnaf replied as we all sat on the grass near the pond.

Kelly gave a confused look at Ahnaf. "What wound?"



Ahnaf sighed. "Look, I know you guys may not believe this, but I was shot."

We both looked at each other and together exclaimed, "HUH?!"

Ahnaf replied, "Yes, I was. I completely remember. I was running to help my mom, and one of the dudes shot me. I clearly saw blood running out of my chest. Mom and the doctor said it wasn't my blood, but I know they're hiding something."

Kelly placed her hand on his shoulder. "But why would they lie to you? You can see for yourself that there is no wound."

Ahnaf looked at us and answered in an impatient tone, "Exactly, I was shot, and there is no wound!" Ahnaf then looked at me. "Eric, you remember my dining table, right? When we were kids, one time the kitchen roof fell on it, and it had no effect?"

I answered, "Yes, I do, but what does that have to do wi—"

"I smashed my fist into it last night, and one side of it broke completely. And not just broke—two of its legs shattered!" Ahnaf explained.

I sighed. "Yeah, but maybe it was old?"



Ahnaf shook his head. "It's not just that. This morning, I crushed my alarm clock just by hitting it to turn it off. Then, I broke my computer mouse just by clicking it. My game controller snapped in half when I tried to play a game. Even my toothbrush broke when I tried to brush my teeth! And when I turned on the sink, the faucet came off in my hand, spraying water everywhere."

Kelly's eyes widened. "That's... that's incredible. But also kind of scary. How are you doing all this?"

Ahnaf shrugged. "I don't know."

I got irritated. "So what do you mean to say? You think you are a superhero now? Come on, that's ridiculous!"

Kelly, who had been silent for so long, finally spoke up. "Guys, stop fighting, come on!"

She stood up and picked up a large rock, almost the size of a tennis ball. She handed it to me. "Crush it with only your hands."

I looked at her, flabbergasted. "EH! What?"

She stated in an exasperated voice, "Agghhh! Just do as I say!"

I followed her orders and clenched my fist around the rock, trying to crush it. First with one hand, then pressing it with both hands. After countless tries, I gave up.

She then handed it to Ahnaf. "Ahnaf, now you try."

I was annoyed. "Ah, this is pointless, there is n—"

Words stopped forming in my mouth as a crack could be heard.

Ahnaf, with just his right hand, clenched the stone and crushed it to pieces. Both of us looked at him astounded, with our jaws open and eyes wide. Even Ahnaf couldn't believe what he saw. He sat there, looking at his hands, watching pieces of rock sliding down his palm.

He looked at us in shock. "Guys! What... has... happened to me???"



I looked at Ahnaf and Kelly and finally broke the silence, "Alright everyone. I have a place where we all should visit right now!"

Kelly asked, "Where?"

I replied, "The nearby junkyard."

We reached the old junkyard; the smell of rusted metal was in the air, and hundreds of broken-down electronics and cars were piled atop each other. I led them to a mildly empty space with various cars and rusted engines in front.

"Alright Ahnaf, pick that car up," I asked confidently.

Ahnaf, surprised, responded, "Wha... what? Who do you think I am? The Sentinel?"

I said, "No, but you sure seem to have superhuman strength somehow! Come on, try it!"

Ahnaf reluctantly agreed and went near the car. He placed his hand under the bumper and tried pulling it up. He tried and tried but couldn't lift it as it was too heavy for him. Soon, the bumper broke off, and he fell.

"Agghhh! That was tough," Ahnaf said, exhausted.

Kelly thought for a bit and then said, "Hmm... it looks like Ahnaf is stronger than most people but not at the same level as the Sentinel. Hey babe, punch the car, destroy it as much as you can!"

Ahnaf, now excited, moved forward and started pummeling the car. Each punch left a dent in the metal frame, and as he kept punching, the dents grew wider and wider. He hit the roof with both his fists, bending it down and crushing the metal. After a few minutes, there was nothing left of the car but a mangled heap of metal.

We stood there, amazed at what Ahnaf had done. It was clear that something extraordinary was happening to him, and we needed to figure out what it was.



"NOW THAT IS AWESOME!!!" Ahnaf screamed in excitement as we all laughed, feeling happy and prideful knowing Ahnaf had superpowers now.

As the evening grew late, we decided to head home. We left the junkyard and made our way to the bus stop. The road near the junkyard was barren, sending chills down my spine as there was no one else around. Just then, the sound of bikes echoed through the air. A group of 6 to 7 bikers appeared, wearing black leather jackets, all middle-aged and riding cruisers. Among them was a familiar face —Paul Santos, Fred's elder brother.



They surrounded us, driving their bikes around in a circle, trapping us. Ahnaf was strong, but there was only so much he could do against so many. He tried pushing through but got kicked around.

Paul's eyes locked onto Ahnaf, and a menacing grin spread across his face. "Well, well, well, look who we have here," he sneered. "You think you can mess with my brother and get away with it?"

Ahnaf stepped forward, his newfound confidence evident. "I didn't want to hurt Fred, but he left me no choice."

Paul revved his bike's engine, the sound echoing ominously. "You're gonna pay for what you did to him."

I shouted, "Leave us alone, Paul! Your brother was always the one who started it!"

Paul, in an angry tone, retorted, "Shut the hell up, little shit. Guys, get the girl. Let's show her what it feels like to be with a real man, mwahahaha."

That was it for Ahnaf. He kicked one of the bikers, causing him to lose control and crash near a wall. Just as Ahnaf was about to hit another biker, Paul pulled out a metal crowbar and struck Ahnaf's head hard with a clank. Ahnaf started losing consciousness slowly, struggling to stand, but another hit came, and he fell down.

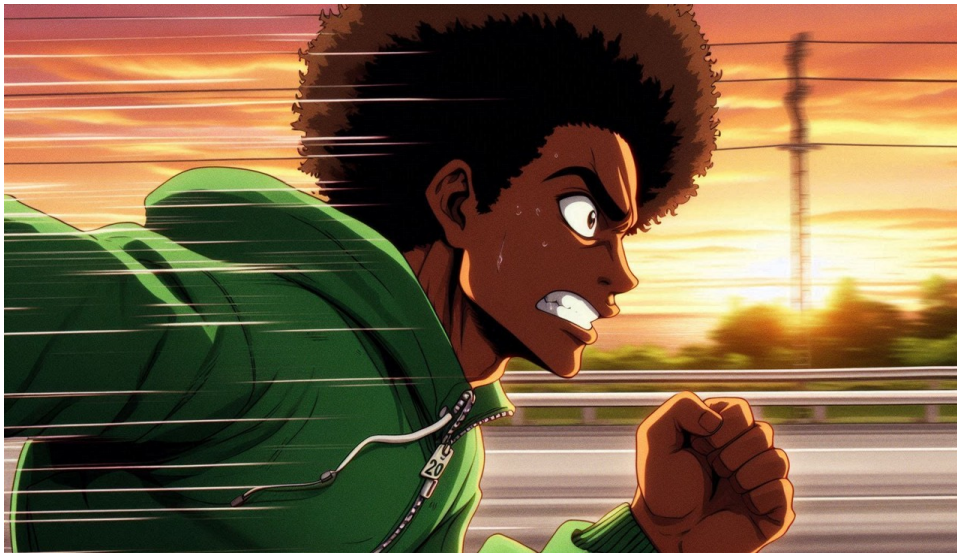
Suddenly, one of the bikers picked up Kelly, and they all started driving off. I stood there helplessly, trying to assess the situation. I saw my best friend, with whom I had spent most of my life, lying on the ground, bleeding from his head. I knew nothing was going to happen to him as he had survived a gunshot wound, but Kelly... I saw her crying on one of the biker's seats, and the bikers were trying to tie her mouth with a handkerchief. She looked at me with tears in her eyes, pleading for help.

It was dark, and then suddenly something in me broke the trance I was in. I started running, faster than I ever had, focusing only on Kelly.

10 mph... the fastest I've ever run. My legs pumped like pistons, each stride propelling me forward with a force I didn't know I possessed



20 mph... faster than most men on Earth. My legs were a blur, moving with a speed and precision that felt almost superhuman. The ground seemed to disappear beneath me as I sprinted forward, each stride longer and more powerful than the last. The wind roared in my ears, but I barely noticed it. My focus was entirely on Kelly and the bikers ahead.



30 mph... Faster than the fastest athlete on the planet. The wind roared in my ears, and my heart pounded like a drum. I felt invincible, like nothing could stop me.



40 mph... The world starts blurring around me. The scenery whizzes past in a whirlwind of colors, and the ground beneath my feet feels like it's barely there. My body moves with a fluidity and grace that defies logic, each stride propelling me forward with an almost effortless power.



50 mph... I have caught up with the speed of the bikes. The wind whips past my face, and the ground beneath me feels like it's barely there.



60mph ... I Am Going To Make Them PAY!!!

There were **5** of them. I punched the back of one of the bikers with all my might, sending him flying through the air. He crashed into another biker, and they both tumbled violently onto the street, their bikes skidding and sparking as they fell.

3 left. They were disoriented, unable to comprehend what was happening in the darkness of the night. I moved with lightning speed, darting to the right of one biker and shoving the guy on the left with such force that he smashed into the pavement, his bike flipping over him.

2 left. Ahead of me was Paul, the mastermind behind this chaos. My blood boiled with rage as I remembered his vile words about Kelly. How dare he! I grabbed him by the jacket, lifting him off his bike, and hurled him onto the street with a bone-crunching impact. The sound of his body scraping against the asphalt was sickening.

Just 1 left. I saw her, Kelly, right in front of me. My heart pounded with a mix of fury and relief. I had reached my goal. I grabbed her, lifting her into my arms, and with a powerful kick, I sent the last biker's tire spinning out of control. The bike crashed with a deafening screech, metal twisting and sparks flying.

And then I lowered my pace, **50... 30... 20... 05...** and then I stopped. Kelly was unconscious in my arms. As the adrenaline wore off, I looked around at the trail of bodies I had left behind, blood splattered on the floor, a sea of crimson red. The destruction I had

caused was overwhelming, and the reality of my actions began to sink in.

As I stood there, trying to process everything, I saw Ahnaf running towards me. His face was a mix of concern and determination. Instinctively, I looked up at the sky. The night was clear, and the stars shone brightly, a stark contrast to the chaos around me. The sky was a deep, beautiful crimson red.

As I started losing consciousness, I felt Ahnaf's hands grabbing Kelly from my arms as I fell. My vision blurred, but I could still see the stars above, twinkling like distant beacons of hope. In that moment, even though I was falling, I felt different. It was as if I had already ascended among the stars, transcending the chaos and destruction below.

The world around me faded, but a sense of peace washed over me and I was ready to embrace whatever challenges lay ahead.

